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## **Complaint Screening Committee REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**

**December 6, 2021**

***Held via Zoom***

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular session of the Arizona Board of Psychologist Examiners Complaint Screening Committee was called to order by Madame Chair Shreeve at 9:02 a.m. on December 6, 2021. Three executive sessions were held.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

#### **Committee Members Present**

Tamara Shreeve, MPA – Chair  
Matthew A. Meier, Psy.D.

#### **Attorney General's Office**

Jeanne Galvin, Assistant Attorney General

#### **Staff Present**

Heidi Herbst Paakkonen, Executive Director  
Jennifer Michaelson, Deputy Director

### **3. CASE DISCUSSION/DECISION**

#### **a. Nicole Huggins, Psy.D., Complaint No. 22-03**

Dr. Meier summarized the case, including salient points of the investigation and pertinent records, noting that a complaint was opened by Board staff for further investigation after receiving information from a parent involved in custody proceedings that indicated he had received a judgment against Dr. Huggins by the Maricopa County Justice Courts for her failure to submit psychological evaluation reports in time for his family court hearing. Dr. Huggins and her attorney, Faren Akins, Esq., Ph.D., participated, made a statement and answered questions from the Committee.

*It was the consensus of the Committee to table this matter and review the case at the end of the meeting to allow Dr. Huggins time to submit the requested documentation (emails) by the Committee to Board staff. The case was subsequently reviewed again at 11:56 a.m.*

After deliberation, Dr. Meier made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shreeve, to dismiss this matter, as there are no violations of rule or statute. The motion carried unanimously (2-0), by a voice vote.

**b. Nicole Huggins, Psy.D., Complaint No. 22-04**

Ms. Shreeve summarized the case, including salient points of the investigation and pertinent records. The Complainant was present and answered questions from the Committee. The Licensee and her attorney, Faren Akins, Esq., Ph.D., participated and made a statement.

*At 12:31 p.m., Ms. Shreeve made a motion, seconded by Dr. Meier, to go into Executive Session to receive confidential legal advice. Open session reconvened at 12:36 p.m.*

After deliberation, Ms. Shreeve made a motion, seconded by Dr. Meier, to dismiss this matter upon Board staff receiving confirmation from the Complainant that Dr. Huggins has emailed the report to him, as directed by the Committee to do so. The motion carried unanimously (2-0), by a voice vote.

**c. Michael Epstein, Ph.D., Complaint No. 20-10**

Dr. Meier summarized the case, including salient points of the investigation and pertinent records. Dr. Epstein and his two attorneys, Jeffrey Carver, Esq., and Sara Stark, Esq., participated, made a statement, and answered questions from the Committee.

*At 10:24 a.m., Dr. Meier made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shreeve, to go into Executive Session to receive confidential legal advice. Open session reconvened at 10:49 a.m.*

Upon reconvening from Executive Session, the Committee asked Dr. Epstein and his attorneys additional questions.

After deliberation, Dr. Meier made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shreeve, to dismiss this matter, as there are no violations of rule or statute. The motion carried unanimously (2-0), by a voice vote.

**d. Michael Epstein, Ph.D., Complaint No. 22-05**

Ms. Shreeve summarized the case, including salient points of the investigation and pertinent records, noting that Board staff opened a complaint for further investigation after receiving information from the Navy during the proceedings for Complaint No. 20-10 that indicated Dr. Epstein had been arrested in 2019 for DUI in San Diego, California and subsequently entered into a military diversion program. It was noted that Dr. Epstein failed to notify the Board of the charge, as required by law. The Licensee and his attorney, Sara Stark, Esq., participated, made a statement, and answered questions from the Committee.

*At 11:14 a.m., Ms. Shreeve made a motion, seconded by Dr. Meier, to go into Executive Session to review Dr. Epstein's confidential health information and to subsequently receive confidential legal advice if needed. Open session reconvened at 11:40 a.m.*

The Committee expressed concern with regard to Dr. Epstein's failure to ever report the 2019 DUI to the Board, as required under A.R.S. § 32-3208. Additionally, Dr. Epstein checked "no" to the background questionnaire on his 2020 licensure renewal application which inquires if there are any pending criminal charges or convictions that have occurred since the last renewal period.

After deliberation, Ms. Shreeve made a motion, seconded by Dr. Meier, to forward Complaint no. 22-05 to the Board for potential violations of A.R.S. § 32-3208 and A.R.S. § 32-2061(16)(m), using fraud, misrepresentation or deception to obtain or attempt to obtain a psychology license or to pass or attempt to pass a psychology licensing examination or in assisting another person to do so, and to recommend to the Board that non-disciplinary action be issued to Dr. Epstein. The motion carried unanimously (2-0), by a voice vote.

*The Committee took a comfort break at 11:46 a.m. and resumed at 11:56 a.m.*

#### **4. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Dr. Meier made a motion, seconded by Ms. Shreeve, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried (2-0) and the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.